

**Proclamation 4840 of April 22, 1981**

**National Maritime Day, 1981**

**By the President of the United States of America**

**A Proclamation**

The maritime industry has been a key contributor to our economic strength and security since our Nation was founded. Its continued growth and prosperity is necessary for the economic renewal we all seek.

As the leader in world trade and the principal military power of the free world, the United States conveys goodwill through its Merchant Marine, serving the cause of international peace. The Merchant Marine also stands ready to provide logistical support in military emergencies.

In recognition of the importance of the American Merchant Marine and the men and women serving aboard our merchant ships, Americans have observed National Maritime Day on May 22 for the last 49 years. This observance commemorates the same date in 1819, when the *SS Savannah* began the first steamship, transatlantic voyage from the port of Savannah, Georgia.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby urge the people of the United States to honor our American Merchant Marine on May 22, 1981, by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and other suitable places, and I request that all ships under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

RONALD REAGAN

**Proclamation 4841 of April 23, 1981**

**National Day of Recognition for Veterans of the Vietnam Era**

**By the President of the United States of America**

**A Proclamation**

The decade which has come to be known as the Vietnam era was a time of trial for our Nation. Nearly every citizen was touched in some way by the war in Southeast Asia.

As in all wars, the brunt of the conflict was borne by the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who served in our Armed Forces during that time, particularly the millions who saw duty in Vietnam. Beyond the 57,000 who died during the Vietnam war, we have among us millions of veterans who have yet to receive the full measure of thanks for having accepted the call to arms when such service was not popular with all Americans. More than 300,000 of these were wounded in Vietnam, many suffering permanent disabilities.

The cold statistics are empty, however, unless we keep in mind the individual and personal drama which accompanies each Vietnam-era veteran and casualty. Much has been said about the sacrifice made by those who served, but full recognition of the Nation's debt of gratitude to them is long overdue.

Our first national commemoration of the Vietnam-era veteran was in 1974, when Vietnam Veterans Day was proclaimed pursuant to a joint resolution of the Congress. I believe it is appropriate again to recognize and commemorate those men and women who did their duty in a time of crisis. No one should doubt the nobility of the effort they made.

By their demonstrations of loyalty and courage, Vietnam veterans have earned our esteem. A recent survey revealed that the American public overwhelmingly admires the Vietnam-era veteran. Certainly, those veterans who suffer from physical and psychic aftereffects can look to their fellow citizens for understanding and help.

In these times of economic hardship and budget restriction every citizen should be aware that showing our gratitude to the Vietnam veteran will take more than leaving it up to the Federal Government to provide money and programs. Each of us must do his or her part in reaching out in a personal way to these brave men and women. This recognition will mean much to the Vietnam veterans who never received the thanks they deserved when they originally returned home from war.

In honor of those who deserve the profound gratitude of their countrymen, the Congress, by joint resolution, has requested the President to issue a proclamation designating Sunday, April 26, 1981, as a National Day of Recognition for Veterans of the Vietnam Era.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, call upon all Americans, and upon patriotic and civic organizations, to observe Sunday, April 26, 1981, as a National Day of Recognition for Veterans of the Vietnam Era. I urge my fellow citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities dedicated to those issues of concern to Vietnam veterans.

I call upon officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings and grounds on that day in testimony of our respect for the contributions of Vietnam veterans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

RONALD REAGAN